

# Public Document Pack



## AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL Democratic Services

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28 February 2019

### CABINET

A meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held at **6.30 pm** on **Tuesday 12 March 2019** in **The Olympic Room - Aylesbury Vale District Council**, when your attendance is requested.

**NOTE:** There will be an informal session starting at 6.15 pm to give Members the opportunity to comment on issues on the Agenda. The press and public may attend as observers.

**Membership:** Councillors: A Macpherson (Leader), S Bowles (Deputy Leader), P Irwin, H Mordue, C Paternoster, Sir Beville Stanier Bt, P Strachan, J Ward and M Winn

Contact Officer for meeting arrangements: Bill Ashton; [bashton@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:bashton@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk);

### AGENDA

#### 1. APOLOGIES

#### 2. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February, 2019, copy attached as an appendix.

#### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interests.

#### 4. NEW HOMES BONUS - MICRO GRANTS UPDATE (Pages 7 - 12) Councillor Mordue Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

To consider the attached report.

Contact Officer: Jan Roffe (01296) 585186



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## CABINET

12 FEBRUARY 2019

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Macpherson (Leader); Councillors S Bowles (Deputy Leader), P Irwin, Sir Beville Stanier Bt, P Strachan and M Winn

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Stuchbury

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors H Mordue, C Paternoster and J Ward

### 1. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 10 January, 2019 and 16 January, 2019, be approved as correct records.

### 2. BUCKS HOME CHOICE ALLOCATIONS POLICY UPDATE

Cabinet received a report, posted in full on the Council's web site, and summarised in the Minutes of the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee of 29 October, 2019 (also available on the Council's web site), concerning proposed amendments to the Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy.

The Council was a member of the Bucks Home Choice Partnership which comprised all four District Councils in Buckinghamshire. These authorities managed the collective housing register and the allocation of affordable rented accommodation within their respective areas. A number of changes were being suggested to the Policy to take account of changes in legislation, and recent case law. The Partnership had considered all these factors, alongside the likely impact of Government reforms, and the increased demand and reduced supply of social housing, particularly larger properties.

Applicants who would now qualify for Bucks Home Choice were:-

- Applicants in the statutory reasonable preference categories (even if they did not have a local connection or would normally be non qualifying as required by the Housing Act 1996). However, applicants with a local connection were prioritised above those without a local connection when allocating properties.
- Applicants owed prevention or relief duties within the Council's statutory homeless duties (Part VII of the Housing Act 1996) were to be included to reflect the changes made by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- Applicants meeting the criteria set out in the Right to Move Regulations 2015.
- Applicants who had left the local authority area for a period of up to four months, where they were staying with family to search for alternative accommodation in the area.
- Applicants placed into supported accommodation out of the area would retain a local connection with the area they were living in prior to placement.
- Prisoners who had been released from prison would retain a local connection with the area they were living in prior to going to prison.

Applicants who would no longer qualify for Bucks Home Choice were:-

- Applicants aged 16 or 17 (unless there was an adult who could hold the tenancy as a trustee until they were 18).
- Applicants who had formally owned a property within the last five years and had disposed of capital without making reasonable housing arrangements. Evidence as to the circumstances would be required.
- Applicants who had previously purchased a Right to Buy or Right to Acquire property (unless they were owed a main homelessness duty).
- Applicants subjected to an Anti-Social Behaviour Order and/or had broken the terms of their tenancy and/or where a Notice to Quit had been served.
- Applicants aged over 55 who owned suitable and affordable accommodation, or who had assets or savings sufficient to enable them to source accommodation in the private sector. Decisions on these cases would be taken on a case by case basis, as opposed to income or savings thresholds being set. Guidance would be provided to case workers to ensure a degree of consistency in decision making and all decisions would carry a statutory right of review by a senior officer.

There were a number of other policy changes:-

- Where a change of circumstances resulted in the award of a higher priority band, the priority date of the banding would be amended to the date of the notification of the change. This would ensure that applicants waiting longer in the same circumstances were given priority in shortlisting. On the reverse, where a change of circumstances resulted in the award of a lower band, the date would remain the same.
- Initially the Partnership proposed to include an amendment to increase the bedroom sharing age of same sex siblings from 16 to 21. However, following consultation with members of the public and housing providers, it had become clear that a significant number disagreed with the age of 21. It was therefore proposed that same sex siblings share a room up to the age of 18, in accordance with the age when adolescents were generally no longer considered to be minors, and granted full rights and responsibilities of an adult. Those adults over the age of 18 would be encouraged to apply for housing in their own right where possible.
- To place applicants who owed rent arrears to a landlord in a new Band E until such time as they had cleared the arrears. This meant that applicants owing rent arrears were not likely to be nominated for a tenancy where it was also likely that the nomination would be unsuccessful. However there remained the scope to consider exceptional circumstances where, for example a property was unaffordable.
- The inclusion of three further examples where an applicant could be deemed to have worsened their circumstances, including the refusal of an offer of suitable and affordable private rented accommodation for a statutorily homeless applicant or where an applicant colluded with a landlord or family member to obtain a notice to quit.

- To amend verification procedures to ensure that where an applicant could not be contacted within the next working day following a home visit, the applicant might not be nominated for the property. This was to ensure that the Council met its legal time frames set out in nomination agreements.
- Reduced priority banding of applicants who had applied for homeless assistance to one of the four District Councils belonging to the Bucks Home Choice Partnership under Part VII, but who had been assessed as intentionally homeless.
- Reduced priority of Band D to Band E those who had applied for assistance to one of the four District Councils under Part VII but had been assessed as not in priority need (meaning that there was no long term housing duty). This meant that these applicants would not be placed above those whom the Council had accepted a full homeless duty towards.
- Increased priority for those assessed as under occupying social rented accommodation from Band B to Band A. This would give the highest priority to those applicants who occupied larger family homes to ensure the best use of housing stock and to meet a high priority objective.
- Increased priority for applicants who were living in severely overcrowded rented, either social housing or private sector accommodation and assessed as lacking two bedrooms or more (Band B to Band A). This change was designed to reduce homelessness, as re-housing time would be reduced in recognition of unsuitable housing circumstances.
- Increased priority of applicants living in accommodation assessed as insanitary and/or evidenced as being in a state of significant disrepair, which could not be repaired or rectified, from Band B/C to all being awarded Band B. This change supported reducing homelessness as re-housing time would be reduced in recognition of unsuitable housing circumstances.
- Reduced priority from Band C to Band D for applicants who were eligible, homeless, in priority need and not intentionally homeless and had a local connection to the area (full duty). This was an important change to align the Homelessness Reduction Act's emphasis on preventing homelessness.
- Addition of applicants owed the new Prevention or Relief duty to place into Band E, to ensure that they were given reasonable preference in accordance with the Council's statutory duties.
- Reduced priority for Right to Move applicants (under the Right To Move Regulations 2015) who needed to move to their place of work where they did not hold a local connection from Band D to Band E. These applicants had to be permitted to join the Housing Register to avoid hardship, but local authorities had to be satisfied that the tenant needed rather than wished to move for work reasons.

Cabinet was advised that the changes had been consulted upon and the report contained an analysis of the results which broadly supported the changes.

It was reported that the Bucks Home Choice Partnership was awaiting legal advice in relation to the qualification of those who were guilty of anti-social behaviour. Accordingly Cabinet agreed that the relevant Director, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities should be authorised to make any necessary

amendments to take account of the legal advice. In order to allow sufficient time during which to fully analyse that advice it was intended to submit the revised policy to the Council meeting on 17 April, 2019.

Members also discussed the implications for the housing allocation policy of moving to a new unitary authority. It was accepted that the policy would have to be re-visited, and in particular how it would operate across a much larger council area in terms of local connections.

The proposed changes had been considered by the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee, which having sought clarification around number of specific issues as summarised in the Cabinet report, was satisfied with them.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the information obtained through the formal consultation exercise be noted and the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee be thanked for its input to the update of the policy.
- (2) That subject to (3) below, the Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy be approved for submission to full Council. (This will take place on 17 April,2019).
- (3) That the relevant Director after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, be authorised to make any further necessary amendments to take account of further legal advice as to the qualification of those guilty of anti-social behaviour, prior to the document being submitted to full Council.
- (4) That it be recognised that the policy would need to be re-visited as part of the transition to the new unitary authority and in particular how it would operate across a much larger council area in terms of local connections.

Cabinet  
12 March 2019

## **AN INCREASE IN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF NEW HOMES BONUS MICRO GRANT THAT MAY BE APPLIED FOR FROM APRIL 2019**

### **1 Purpose**

To seek the Cabinet's approval to increase the maximum amount that town and parish councils and voluntary and community sector organisations can apply for under the New Homes Bonus Micro Grant Scheme from April 2019.

### **2 Recommendation**

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 2.1 | That Cabinet approve an increase in the maximum New Homes Bonus micro grant award from £1,000 to £2,000 from 1 April 2019 as outlined in this report. |
|-----|---|

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 In June 2017 AVDC Cabinet approved the introduction of a micro grant scheme to run alongside the already established New Homes Bonus project grant scheme.
- 3.2 The decision to introduce the new micro grant element helped to mitigate the loss of the Aylesbury Vale Community Chest funding, and also increase access to the NHB initiative to all parishes, not just those larger parishes taking growth.
- 3.3 The micro grants are easily accessible and also encompass bids from the voluntary and community sector, where supported by the appropriate parish council.
- 3.4 Up to £1,000 per project is currently available for a variety of purposes such as village hall refurbishments and the purchase of new equipment.
- 3.5 The applications are assessed by the grants officer and the level of the awards is determined by a scoring system. The grants officer's funding recommendations are sent for ratification by the Cabinet Member responsible and a nominated AVALC representative on a monthly basis.
- 3.6 The budget for the micro grant scheme is met from the existing 20% NHB allocation set aside for town and parish councils - £80,000 per annum in 2017/18 and 2018/19. If the total NHB government allocation increases or diminishes, then the Microgrant Scheme should grow or diminish in proportion.

### **4. Current position**

- 4.1 The list attached at Appendix A shows that sixty micro grants have been awarded to a diverse range of parishes and voluntary and community sector organisations for a variety of purposes since the start of the scheme's administration in September 2017.

- 4.2 The monitoring feedback received demonstrates that the funding is appreciated, especially by smaller parishes and voluntary organisations and provides benefit at a local level to local communities for a relatively low investment.
- 4.3 The number of applications received is comparable to those received by the Community Chest. In its ten year administration, the Community Chest did not award more than fifty micro grants in any given year.
- 4.4 The micro grants have been widely advertised to parish and town councils and the voluntary and community sector and have also been advertised in the AV Times on several occasions and will be again in the March issue.
- 4.5 The scheme is however undersubscribed and will be topped back up to £80,000 at the beginning of April for funding in 2019/20.

It is therefore proposed that:

- 4.6 The maximum amount applicants may apply for is increased from £1,000 to £2,000, given the availability of funds and the value of these smaller grants to the community.

## 5. **Recommendations**

- 5.1 That Cabinet approve an increase in the maximum NHB micro grant award from £1,000 to £2,000 as outlined in point 4 of this report.

## 6. **Options considered**

- 6.1 Whether or not to increase the current maximum micro grant award of £1,000 to £2,000.
- 6.2. In consultation with Andrew Small, whether or not to top the micro grant budget back up to £80,000 in April 2019.

## 7. **Reasons for recommendations**

- 7.1 To help voluntary and community sector organisations, and smaller parishes who have been unable to benefit from the larger project grants, apply for a higher level of funding to provide a greater benefit towards smaller project costs.

## 8. **Resource implications**

There are no additional resource implications as a result of the recommendations within this report as the NHB micro grant budget allocation is met from the existing NHB grants budget.

Contact Officer: Jan Roffe (01296) 585186

Background Documents: New Homes bonus – Expansion of the criteria Decisions Report June 2017.

## NHB MICRO GRANTS AWARDED September 2017 to February 2019

MG	Organisation	Project	Month and year	Amount requested	Amount awarded per month	total of micro grant expenditure	£80,000.00
MG1	East & Botolph Claydon Village Hall	Refurb of disabled toilet	Sep-17	£1,000.00	£800.00		
MG2	Dinton Cricket Club	Electronic cricket scoreboard		£1,000.00	£800.00		
MG3	Padbury Village Football Club	New pitch line marking equipment		£814.00	£814.00		
MG4	First Oakley Scout Group	New Mess tent		£999.00	£799.00		
<b>Total</b>				<b>£3,813.00</b>	<b>£3,213.00</b>	<b>£3,213.00</b>	<b>£76,787.00</b>
MG5	Edgcott Parish Council	Flooring in toilet area	Oct-17	£902.00	£902.00		
MG6	Nigerian Association	New PA system		£982.74	£900.00		
<b>Total</b>				<b>£1,884.74</b>	<b>£1,802.00</b>	<b>£5,015.00</b>	<b>£74,985.00</b>
MG7	Ludgershall Memorial Hall	Re-decoration of hall	Nov-17	£1,000.00	£1,000.00		
MG8	Cheddington Community Film Club	AV Equipment		£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG9	Great Brickhill Parish Hall	New equipment for Sports for Seniors		£1,000.00	£1,000.00		
<b>Total</b>				<b>£3,000.00</b>	<b>£2,900.00</b>	<b>£7,915.00</b>	<b>£72,085.00</b>
MG10	Bucks Vision	Specialist Equipment for Goalball UK	Dec-17	£1,000.00	£1,000.00		
MG11	Buckingham Canal Society	Specialist solar pump for re-watering canal		£1,000.00	£1,000.00		
MG12	Aylesbury Multicultural Centre	Improved security and access to building		£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG13	Men In Sheds, Winslow	New tools and equipment for expansion		£1,000.00	£1,000.00		
<b>Total</b>				<b>£4,000.00</b>	<b>£3,900.00</b>	<b>£11,815.00</b>	<b>£68,185.00</b>
MG14	Stewkley Players	New sound desk and Wordpress website upgrade (scored 90% and as willing to contribute to costs but reserves low - agreement to fund to full amount of project cost as well below £1k).	Jan-18	£400.00	£460.00		
MG15	Queens Park Arts Centre	Refurbishment of café facilities and purchase of new equipment		£1,000.00	£1,000.00		
<b>Total</b>				<b>£1,400.00</b>	<b>£1,460.00</b>	<b>£13,275.00</b>	<b>£66,725.00</b>

MG16	Ickford Parish Council	Folding tables, chairs and crockery for refurbished pavilion project	Feb-18	£991.97	£1,000.00			
MG17	Cuddington Sunshine Club	Matinee Cinema for older people		£957.60	£900.00			
MG18	North Marston Parish Council	Re-creation of village pond		£1,000.00	£900.00			
MG19	Quainton Sports Club - Tennis	Bench and shoe scrapers/finishing touches to refurbishment of tennis courts		£824.00	£800.00			
<b>Total</b>				<b>£3,773.57</b>	<b>£6,520.00</b>	<b>£19,795.00</b>	<b>£60,205.00</b>	
MG20	Marsh Gibbon Parish Council	Skateboarding new ramps and slide bar	Mar-18	£1,000.00	£900.00			
MG21	Waddesdon Parish Council	Tools and equipment to facilitate Waddesdon's Emergency Plan		£1,000.00	£1,000.00			
<b>Total</b>				<b>£2,000.00</b>	<b>£1,900.00</b>	<b>£21,695.00</b>	<b>£58,305.00</b>	
<b>Micro Grant budget topped back up to £80,000</b>								<b>£80,000.00</b>
MG22	Great Horwood Cricket Club	Cricket Club car park refurbishment	Apr-18	£1,000.00	£900.00			
MG23	Quainton Sports Club - Tennis	Maintenance equipment for new synthetic grass tennis courts		£908.00	£900.00			
MG24	Great Brickhill Tennis Club	New tennis nets and windbreaks		£1,000.00	£900.00			
MG25	Quarrendon & Meadowcroft 50 Plus Badminton Club	Short tennis equipment		£402.00	£400.00			
MG26	Marsh Gibbon PC	Skateboarding equipment storage shed		£1,000.00	£800.00			
MG27	Orchard Ground Association	Wall mounted water boiler in pavilion kitchen		£1,000.00	£900.00			
						<b>£4,800.00</b>	<b>£4,800.00</b>	<b>£75,200.00</b>
MG28	SC&WCP Let's Go Play scheme	Home Corner play equipment	May-18	£916.74	£900.00			
MG29	Stone, Bishopstone and Hartwell PC	Renovation of pillars to entrance to Memorial Ground		£1,000.00	£900.00			
MG30	Ivinghoe and Pitstone United Cricket Club	Pitch cover and drying machine		£1,000.00	£900.00			
MG31	Ivinghoe and Pitstone Scouts	Various equipment		£1,000.00	£900.00			

APPENDIX A

MG32	Buckinghamshire Mind	Chairs for counselling rooms in Aylesbury		£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG33	Gawcott & Hillesden Cricket Club	24" pitch mower		£1,000.00	£800.00		
MG34	Worminghall Village Hall	Fully accessible access path from gates		£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG35	Bierton with Broughton Parish Council	Replacement LED lighting in Sports Centre		£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG36	Quainton PC	Community beacon		£1,000.00	£900.00		
					<b>£8,000.00</b>	<b>£12,800.00</b>	<b>£67,200.00</b>
MG37	Winslow Town Council	Tables and chairs for meeting room and business hub	Jun-18	£967.00	£900.00		
MG38	Stoke Hammond Community Association	External UPVC doors at the Community Centre		£1,000.00	£1,000.00		
					<b>£1,900.00</b>	<b>£14,700.00</b>	<b>£65,300.00</b>
MG39	Great Brickhill Parish Hall	New chairs and tables for parish hall	Jul-18	£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG40	Great Brickhill Table Tennis Club	Additional table tennis table and screen		£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG41	Halton Parish Council	New Website	Declined	£1,000.00	£0.00		
MG42	Nigerian Association	ID card printer	Declined	£1,000.00	£0.00		
MG43	Waddesdon Parish Council	Junior Football facilities		£1,000.00	£800.00		
MG44	Aylesbury Vale Multicultural Community Centre	Refurbishment of kitchen facilities		£1,000.00	£900.00		
					<b>£3,500.00</b>	<b>£18,200.00</b>	<b>£61,800.00</b>
MG45	Queens Park Arts Centre	Computer upgrades and lockable cabinets	Aug-18	£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG46	North Marston Parish Council	Chestnut Tree bench		£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG47	Great Brickhill Parish Council	New tables and chairs for village hall		£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG48	Relate	Community information stand and carry bag		£834.00	£800.00		
					<b>£3,500.00</b>	<b>£21,700.00</b>	<b>£58,300.00</b>
MG49	Akeley Parish Council	Play area swings	Sep-18	£1,000.00	£900.00		
MG50	Quarrendon and Meadowcroft Over 50's Badminton Club	Marketing leaflets and materials		£1,000.00	£900.00		
					<b>£1,800.00</b>	<b>£23,500.00</b>	<b>£56,500.00</b>
	<b>Zero applications received in October</b>		<b>Oct-18</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>		
	<b>Applications received in November assessed in December</b>		<b>Nov-18</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>		

MG51	Pitstone Parish Council on behalf of Pitstone Youth Cafe	Replacement games consoles and sporting equipment including football goal posts and basketballs.	Dec-18	£800.00	£800.00		
MG52	Gawcott & Hillesden Cricket Club	Polypropolene white sightscreen		£1,000.00	£1,000.00		
MG53	Preston Bissett Parish Council	New parish notice board		£1,000.00	£1,000.00		
					<b>£2,800.00</b>	<b>£26,300.00</b>	<b>£53,700.00</b>
MG54	Aylesbury Town Cricket Club	Replacement practice nets	Jan-19	£1,000.00	£900.00		
				<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>£900.00</b>	<b>£27,200.00</b>	<b>£52,800.00</b>
MG55	Buckingham West End Bowls Club	Pitch mowing equipment	Feb-19	£1,000.00	<b>£1,000.00</b>		
MG56	Halton Parish Council	Attic hatch and ladder in village hall		£1,000.00	<b>£1,000.00</b>		
MG57	1st Stewkley Scouts	Electrical wiring installation to Scout Hut		£1,000.00	<b>£1,000.00</b>		
MG58	Cuddington Sunshine Club	Sunshine Club Matinee Cinema film hire		£790.00	<b>£790.00</b>		
MG59	Chat charity	Two desk top computers for office		£958.00	<b>£800.00</b>		
MG60	Stewkley Players	Projection equipment (scored 80% so agreement to fund to 80% of £1k)		£700.00	<b>£800.00</b>		
				<b>£5,448.00</b>	<b>£5,390.00</b>	<b>£32,590.00</b>	<b>£47,410.00</b>